

I proudly introduce the 53<sup>th</sup> edition of the Montana Agricultural Statistics Bulletin. This publication is the culmination of a year's worth of data collection and analysis. While this book is filled with interesting facts and figures, it also contains the story of Montana Agriculture. Many producers volunteered their time and information to give the most current picture of the health of agricultural community.

I was recently asked how this data affects them and what benefits are gained from reporting. The first reply is that NASS publications are the foundation for most Government programs, private institutional lending, and private business planning. We talk to many agricultural businesses monthly answering questions and helping them develop business plans to serve the agricultural community. FSA uses County Estimates data for the basis for the ARC and PLC payments, and other disaster payment programs. MSU uses the data to ask for funding grants and to help bolster some of their programs. Pulse crops continue to grow in popularity and acreage and as they have grown, so has interest in pulse data. These are just a few examples of how the data impacts the individual grower.

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) works cooperatively with many partners with many organizations across the state. Using this cooperative agreement gives NASS the ability to achieve the goal of providing timely, accurate, and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. NASS works closely with other federal agencies, the State of Montana, and farm commodity groups in order to produce the best product possible.

Thank you to all of Montana's farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses that made this publication possible. Thank you to all the producers and commodity groups that I have the opportunity to meet, work, and socialize with throughout the year. I would also like to recognize National Association of State Departments of Agriculture employees across the state and the NASS staff (current and retired) for everything you do to make this publication possible.



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## NOTES FROM THE STATE STATISTICIAN

